

FIVE NAAYANMAAR

By

Dr. G. U. Pope.



Edited by

T. N. RAMACHANDRAN.

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THE FOUNDER OF DHARMAPURA AADHINAM



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Gurugnanasambandha Paramacharya Swamigal

**THE FOUNDER OF THE I. I. S. S. R.,
The 28th Gurumaha Sannidhanam of Dharmapuram Aadhinam**



**His Holiness
Shanmukha Desika Gnanasambandha
Paramacharya Swamigal**

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EDITOR'S NOTE.

When the International Institute of Saiva Siddhanta Research sought the leave of His Holiness, the 26th pontiff of Dharmapura Aadhinam to hold a Seminar on 9th, 10th and 11th May, 1987, on "Aruvakaicchamayam", His Holiness was pleased to command us to bring out a worthy book in connection with the Seminar. We at once humbly suggested that an anthology of Dr. G. U. Pope's essays on Naayanmaar could be taken up for publication. "Excellent" said His Holiness and added: "A work on Saivite Naayanmaar by a pious Christian is truly a desideratum". With lightning speed the work of publication was undertaken and completed.

This anthology is truly a hagiology, Dr. Pope, the reader can find for himself, had entered into the spirit of the Periya Puraanam with even greater valiancy than some of our acknowledged cognoscenti of the Twelfth Tirumurai. Of course his narration goes amiss in one or two instances. But then his comprehension of the true message of the work of St. Sekkizhaar is amazingly masterly.

The histories of St. Kannappar, St. Kaaraikkaal Ammaiyaar and St. Chandisar are reprinted from the footnotes appended to the English version of Tiruvaachakam by Dr. G. U. Pope. The Life of Tirugnaana-sambandhar is from The Indian Magazine and Review, London (May, 1886) as reprinted by the Tamil University Publication Series-4, 1955. The Life and Legends of

Sundaramurti Naayanaar is reproduced from the Siddhanta Deepika (1901, vol. V).

We have added footnotes by way of correction as well as explanation wherever necessary.

By the grace of Grace, the Institute will be publishing useful works in Tamil as well as English, and the world of Saivism, we are sure, will welcome our earnest endeavours

Dharmapuram, }
11—5—1987 }

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I. THE LADY OF KĀRAIKĀL

Some of the legends in the Tamil Periya Purānam relate to the period between the first and second great revivals of Āivism, and a few are anterior to both. It seems pretty certain that, while the Jains and Buddhists were active and apparently triumphant everywhere, there were a great multitude of the faithful āivites who, like the Covenanters in Scotland were rendered more zealous by the persecutions to which they were exposed. Among these was the 'Mother' of Kāraikāl, who was a poetess, many of whose verses are still preserved.

The legend gives a most interesting picture of some phases of South-Indian life a thousand years ago.^A The 'Mother' was the wife of a rich merchant of Kāraikāl,¹ whose name was Paramadattan ('Endowed with heavenly gifts'). Her own name was Punithavathiyār ('The pure'). She was very devout, and especially careful to entertain all Āiva devotees that came to her door. One day her husband received from some persons who had come to him on business a present of two mangoes, of a very superior kind, which he sent home to his wife. Soon afterwards, a holy devotee arrived at the house as a mendicant guest; but she had nothing ready to offer him except some boiled rice. This she set before him, and having no other condiment to present, gave him one of the aforesaid mangoes.

At noon her husband returned, and after his meal ate the remaining mango which pleased him so much that

... had given the fruit, never deserts those who serve Him, she offered a mental prayer, and straight way found a mango in her hand, which she carried to her husband. Being a divine gift, it was of incomparable sweetness, and he said to her, 'Where did you obtain this?' She hesitated at first to reveal the wonder that had been wrought on her behalf, but reflected that she ought to have no concealments from her husband, and so told him everything. He gave no credence to her words, but roughly replied, 'If that is so, get me another like it'. She went away, and said in her heart to the god, 'If thou givest me not one more fruit, my word will be disbelieved !' Forthwith she found another fruit still more lovely in her hand. When she carried this to her husband he took it in astonishment ; but behold ! it forthwith vanished. Utterly confounded by these wonderful things, he came to the conclusion that his wife was a supernatural being, and resolved to separate at once from her. He revealed the matter, however, to no one, but quietly equipped a ship in which he embarked a great part of his wealth, and then on a lucky day, worshipping the god of the sea, with sailors and a skilful captain, he set sail for another country, where he made merchandise, accumulated a fortune, and after some time, re-embarking, came back to India to another city in the Pāṇḍīyan land, where he married a merchant's daughter, and lived in great luxury. A daughter was born to him, to whom he gave the name of the wife with whom he had feared to remain, but for whom he retained exceeding reverence.

After awhile his return and prosperity became known to his friends in Kāraikāl, who resolved to compel him to receive again his first wife, their kinswoman, whom he had deserted. They accordingly proceeded to his new residence, carrying with them in a litter his saintly spouse, the 'Mother' of Kāraikāl. When he heard that she had arrived and was halting in a grove outside the town, he was seized with a great dread, and proceeded with his second wife and daughter to where the 'Mother' was encamped surrounded by her kindred. He at once prostrated himself with profoundest reverence before her, saying, 'Your slave is happy here and prosperous through your benediction. To my daughter I have given your sacred name, and I constantly adore you as my tutelary goddess!' Poor Punithavathiyar, utterly confounded by this salutation and worship, took refuge among her kinsfolk, who all cried out, 'Why is the madman worshipping his own wife?' To this Paramadattan replied, 'I myself beheld her work a miracle, and I know that she is no daughter of the human race, but a supernatural being and so I have separated myself from her, and I worship her as my tutelary divinity, and have dedicated this my daughter to her, and therefore have I worshipped her and call upon you to do the same.' But Punithavathiyar pondered the matter, and prayed within herself to Çivan the Supreme, saying: 'Lord, this is my husband's persuasion! Take from me then the beauty that I have hitherto cherished for his sake alone. Remove from me this burthen of the flesh, and give to me the form and features of one of the demon hosts who evermore attend on Thee, and praise Thee'. That very instant, by the grace of the god, her flesh dried

up, and she became a demoness, one of Çivan's whom the earthly world and the heavenly world hold in reverence. Then the gods poured down a rain of fire, and heavenly minstrelsy resounded, and her relatives, feeling her adoration and departed. So she had now become a demoness, and her abode was the wild jungle Ālaṅkādu; but through the inspiration of the god she composed several sacred poems, which are preserved.

Afterwards there came upon her an irresistible desire to behold the Sacred Hill of Kailāṣam, and with inconceivable speed she fled northwards till she arrived at the foot of Mount Kailāṣa, and reflecting that it was not right with her to tread the heavenly ascent she threw herself down, and measured the distance with her head. The goddess Uçivan's bride, beheld her thus ascending, and said to her spouse, 'Who is this that in this strange fashion descends near, a gaunt fleshless skeleton, sustained only by the energy of love?' To which Çivan replied, 'She that comes is the "Mother" devoted to my praises, and this miserable demon-form she has obtained by her prayers.' When she drew near he addressed her with words of love, calling her by the name of 'Mother', which she for ever bore. As soon as she heard the word she fell at his feet worshipping and ejaculating 'Father!' Çivan then said to her, 'What boon does thou ask of me?' She worshipped and replied, 'Lord, to me your slave give love, which is undying and infinite blessedness. I would fain be born on earth no more; but if I must be so born, grant me at least that I may never in any form, at any time, forget Thee, O God; and when thou dost perform thy sacred mystic dance beneath thy feet in rapture may I stand and sing thy praises.'

To which the God replied, 'in Ālaṅkāḍu thou shalt see my dance, and with rapture thou shalt sing.' Then the sacred 'Mother' of Kāraikāl returned, measuring the distance still on her head to holy Ālaṅkāḍu, where she beheld the God's sacred dance, and sang her renowned lyrics in his praise

1) Kāraikāl is a small town held by the French. It is forty-seven miles from Tanjore. Near it is the famous Ālaṅkāḍu (Vatāranyam), a forest of banyan trees, where the shrine of the 'Mother' still stands.^B

The legend illustrates a remarkable feature in the Ćaiva worship of the south, where devotees are not infrequently adored as having become demons. Doubtless, this is connected with pre-Āryan usages, and the poems attributed to the 'Mother' of Kāraikāl present the most vivid picture of demon worship with which I am acquainted. It is not difficult to imagine the source of this tradition. We have the picture of a devout and enthusiastic worshipper of Ćivan who sacrifices everything to the performance of her supposed duties to the god. She is misunderstood by her inappreciative husband, who forsakes her, and finally, with scorn, repudiates her. She has built herself a chapel in the jungle, where she spends her days and nights in prayers and austerities and on her death is worshipped. The legends would soon accumulate, and the poems represent in dramatic form the artistic view of all the circumstances.^C

A. Perhaps a couple of millennia ago. Ed.

B. Dr. G. U. Pope's identification of Vatāranyam with Tiruvalangkādu is erroneous. Ed.

C. Pope need not have added this note to his narration.

THE LEGEND OF KANNAPPA NĀYA NĀR OR THE 'EYE-DEVOTEE'

The image of this renowned South-Indian devotee stands in the temple at Kalahasti (Calastri) near the Pulicat hills. He was a rāja of Uduppūr, and of the shepherd caste (a Vēḍan, or Hill-man; perhaps a Kurumban)¹. The story represents his ancient clan as possessing great wealth and authority in a wild hilly district, where their whole occupation was hunting. There is a Zamindār who lives there now in feudal state. The old chieftain, the father of Kaṇṇappa, whose name was Nāgan (the Dragon-man), is represented to us as moving about attended by fierce hunting dogs, armed with every kind of rustic weapon; a skillful archer, around whose mountain-dwelling innumerable forest animals of every kind had their home, and where the cries 'shoot!' 'hurl!' 'strike!' were mingled from morning to night with the howlings of wild beasts, the barking of dogs, and the sound of the horns and drums of the hunters.

He had no son, and therefore he and his wife went to the temple of SUBRAMANIYAN (a son of Īvan) - the favourite deity of mountaineers, and probably a pre-ryan deity of the South, an object of worship, under many names and forms, in every Tamil hamlet. To him they offered cocks and peafowl, made great feasts with copious libations of strong drink, performed wild dances; and, in fact, according to the legend, seem to have worshipped much after the rude fashion of the demon worshippers of the present day. The result was that by the favour of their tutelary deity a son was born to them who from his early

childhood shared in his father's pursuits, being brought up, it is expressly said, like a 'tiger's cub'.

The proud, happy father used to carry him about on his shoulder, but finding him one day too heavy to be thus borne, gave him the name of Tiṇṇan ('the sturdy one'), which remained his pet household name^A. He was erewhile to bear a more honourable and enduring title! Soon after this the old chief, finding himself unable any longer to conduct the hunting expeditions of the tribe, made over his authority to his son, with whom alone this history is concerned.

Henceforth our young hero is ever in the dense jungles with his veteran huntsmen. One day a wild boar, of gigantic size, that had been caught in their nets, escaped, and made off with prodigious speed to the mountain side. Tiṇṇan pursued it with two faithful attendants, but it led them a weary chase, and did not stop till, exhausted with fatigue, it fell down in the shade of a tree on the slope of a distant hill. There Tiṇṇan with his sword cut it in two. His attendants came up, and were astonished and delighted at his success, and said, 'We will roast the boar here and refresh ourselves'. But there was no water at hand, so they took up the carcase of the boar and carried it some distance onward, till they came in sight of the sacred hill of 'Kālahatti'. At the view of the mountain one of the attendants cried out, that on that mountain summit there was an image of the 'God with flowing hair' (ÇIVAN). 'If we go thither we may worship him', added he. Hearing this the young giant Tiṇṇan again shouldered the boar and strode on, exclaiming, 'with every step that I

advance towards the mountain the burden of the diminishes.

There is some miraculous power here; I must not say what it is'. So saying he rushed on with eagerness till he came to the bank of a river, where he deposited his burden, bade his companions make a fire and prepare the feast, while he himself hastened onward. On the further bank he beheld on the slope of the hill, on the further bank of the stream, a stone lingam, the upper part of which was fashioned into a rude image of the head of the god. At that moment he beheld it, as the magnet draws the iron, so his soul, which had been somehow prepared by the memory of good deeds and austerities performed in some former birth; and his whole nature was changed, every feeling was swallowed up in intense love for the god, whom for the first time he now beheld².

As a mother, seeing her long lost son return, does not wait but rushes to embrace him, so he threw himself upon the image, tenderly embraced it, and fervently kissed it. With tears of rapture, his soul dissolving like wax in the sunshine, he cried out, 'Ah, wondrous blessedness! to have this slave this divinity has been given! But how is it that the god remains here alone in a wilderness where elephants, tigers, bears, and other wild beasts dwell though he were some rude mountaineer like me?' Examining the image more closely, he saw that it had been recently poured upon it and green grass was strewn over it. 'Who can have done this?' said he. The attendant, who had in the meantime come up, replied

In the olden time, when I came here on a hunting expedition, with your father, a Brāhman, I remember, came, poured water and placed leaves upon this image, repeating some mysterious words ; perhaps he is here still'. So it dawned upon the mind of Tiṇṇan that these and other services, which he himself could render, might be acceptable to the god 'But', said he, 'there is no one here to supply him with food. He is alone and I cannot leave him for an instant ; yet I must perforce go and bring for him some of the boar's flesh cooked for our feast'.

So, after much hesitation and unwillingness to lose sight for a moment of his new found treasure, he went back, crossed the stream, where he found the food already prepared and his servants wondering at the delay in his return. Tiṇṇan regarding them not, took some of the boar's flesh, and cutting off the tenderest portions, roasted them on the point of an arrow ; tasted them, to ascertain that they were savoury ; carefully selected the best' putting them into a cup of teak leaves which he had sewn together ; and prepared to return to the woodland deity with his offering. The servants seeing all this, very reasonably concluded that their master had suddenly gone mad, and hastened off home to take the news to ask the priestess of their tribe to return with them and exorcise the evil spirit that they supposed had taken possession of their lord. Tiṇṇan unconscious of their departure, hastened back with the food in one hand, and his bow and arrows in the other. As he crossed the river, he filled his mouth with water, with which coming before the image he besprinkled it. He then took the wild jungle flowers

from his own hair, and put them over it, and pressed the coarse boar's flesh he had brought, saying : Lord, I have chosen for thee the daintiest portions, carefully prepared them with fire, have tasted them, softened them with my own teeth. I have sprinkled thee with water from the stream, and put on thee flowers thou mayest love. Accept my gift. (This presentation of food to the LINGAM and its images is often referred to in these stories, and the impression is given that the worshippers believed that the image itself consumed the offering, comp. V. 13-16 ; but he never expressly said that the food disappeared from before the shrines, though this is sometimes implied.)

Meanwhile the sun went down, and during the whole night Tiṇṇan with his arrow on the strung bow kept watch and ward around the god, and at dawn went forth to the mountain to hunt, that he might provide for the daily wants of his new master. While he was gone on this errand Brāhman in charge of the LINGAM, who was a learned ascetic of renowned virtue and holiness, Çivagōchar came at daybreak, and having performed his own ablution at the river, provided himself with a vessel of pure water for the purification of the divine image, and a basket of saffron flowers and fresh leaves for its adornment, uttering the mystic Five Syllables, devoutly drew near. A scene of unutterable pollution met his horrified gaze. Flesh and bones were strewed around, and the image itself had been defiled with filthy water and common flowers ! With trembling horror he sprang back, exclaiming, 'Oh, god of gods ! what unhallowed impure hands of mountaineers have brought these pollutions !'

How didst thou permit them thus to profane thy presence?' So saying, he wept, fell down, and rolled in anguish before the god. But, reflecting that at any rate it was wrong to delay any longer the sacred service, he carefully removed the unhallowed things from the precincts, and proceeded to perform his daily worship according to the Vedic rites; and having sung the appointed hymn, and many times gone round the right of the image, and prostrated himself in adoration, departed to his hermitage.

Meanwhile the servants, having taken the news of Tiṣṇan's madness to old Nāgan, his father, returned with him and the priestess of their demon temple. They both attempted to reason with the young enthusiast, and to recall him to the worship to which he had been accustomed; but its wild orgies delighted him no more. His whole affection was centred upon the new found Çivan; so they, regarding him as hopelessly mad returned sorrowing to their village.

(One object of this legend seems to be the reconciliation of the orthodox Çaiva worship with the ruder forms of demon worship then in use. The contrast is exceedingly striking when the refined and thoroughly instructed Brāhman with his scrupulous attention to all the minutiae of vedic worship, who regarded the slaying of animals as a crime, and the eating of their flesh as an unspeakable abomination, and considered that whatever had touched a man's mouth was polluted, and that the wild human inhabitants of the jungle were a lower order of creation, is brought face to face with the youthful chieftain of an

almost savage tribe, whose chief delight is to hunt down, slay and devour the birds and beasts of the forest who brings boar's flesh for the unpolluted Çivan to eat and carries water in his mouth wherewith to besprinkle the image, who actually uses his leathern slippers to brush away the refuse leaves from the head of the god who knows no sacred texts; and who worships the same god, indeed, but has nothing to commend him save a rude and uninstructed though zealous devotion.)

Meanwhile the mountaineer guards the god by night, returns at eventide to offer his gifts and perform his rude service, and spends the day in providing flesh of beasts for the god's repast. At dawn, when the young woodman has departed, duly comes the pure and exclusive Brähman, having scrupulously made his own ablutions, clears the precincts, and performs his ceremonious worship. These men so different serve by turns before the same LINGAM, which they both regard with equal reverence!

But this cannot long continue so. The Brähman makes a passionate appeal to Çivan to guard himself from these pollutions, the author of which he cannot trace. He then returns to his hermitage, sad and sorely perplexed. But in the night the god appears to him, and thus addresses him: "That which thou dost complain of is to me most dear and acceptable! Thy rival ministrant is a chieftain of the rude foresters. He is absolutely ignorant of the *vēdas* and the *Çaiva* texts. He knows not the ordinances of worship. But regard not HIM, regard the spirit and motive of his acts. His rough and gigantic frame is instinct with love to me,

his whole knowledge—in thine eyes crass ignorance—is summed up in the knowledge of ME! His every action is dear to me; the touch of his leathern slipper is pleasant to me as that of the tender hand of my son Skanda. The water with which he besprinkles me from his mouth is holy to me as the water of the Ganges. The food he offers me to thee so abominable—is pure love. I regard not the externals of the worship. He utterly loves me, even as thou dost; but come to-morrow when thou shalt see his worship, and I will give thee proof of his devotion to me⁴. The Brāhman slept no more that night, but at daybreak was put in hiding behind the LINGAM by the god himself. And now Çivan, who knows the hearts of his worshippers, in order that Tiṇṇan's truth might be manifest, caused blood to trickle down from the right eye of the image. The young worshipper drawing near beheld this, and exclaimed, 'Oh, my master, who hath wounded thee? What sacrilegious hand, evading my watchfulness, has wrought this evil?' Then seizing his weapons he proceeded to scour the neighbourhood to see if any mountaineer or wild animal could be detected as author of the mischief. Finding none, he threw himself on the ground in despair: but at length reflected that he had heard of remedies which would staunch the flow of blood. So he went and sought out in the jungle some herbs of virtue, and applied them, but the wound bled all the more copiously. Then a happy idea struck him: 'for a wounded eye the remedy is another eye applied' said he; and, pausing not an instant, with his arrow he scooped out his own right eye, and applied it to the bleeding eye of image, from which at once the blood ceased to flow! At this his rapture knew no bounds.

He sang and danced, and poured forth uncouth expressions of ardent thanksgiving; but on looking at the image once more, alas! blood was seen issuing from the other eye. After a moment or two of bewildered sorrow, his countenance was lit up with a radiant light of gladness; for he has still one eye left, and the efficacy of the remedy has been tried already; so he raised himself up, puts his foot close up to the image's suffering eye, that he may be able to feel, when he can no longer see, where to apply the remedy; and proceeds to scoop out the other eye. But this last sacrifice is too much for Çivan to permit to be consummated; from out the LINGAM he puts forth a sacred hand, and grasps that of the youthful enthusiast, who still holds the arrow ready to accomplish his pious intention, and says: 'Stay, Çiṇṇan, stay thine hand, my loving son! Henceforth thy place for ever shall be at my right hand, on my holy mount'. ÇIVAGŌCHARI had learnt the lesson, that LOVE AND SELF-DEVOTION ARE MORE THAN CEREMONIAL PURITY, and fell prostrate; while the choirs of heaven chaunted the beatification of the Saint, who is from age to age adored under his title of KANN-APPAN - the devotee who gave his eyes for the service of his God.

1. These tribes occupied what was called the Tondai land, the district lying between the Pālār and the northern Peṇṇār, formerly under the Pallavas, and annexed to the Çōṛa kingdom in the eleventh century.

2. This sudden illumination and influx of devout feeling towards Çivan, the Supreme, is in strict accordance with the fundamental dogma of Karma, 'old deeds',

which suddenly, after many transmigrations, at the appointed time yield their assured, though long-delayed fruit. (See Pope's NĀLAḌIYĀR, pp.66-69.) This subject demands the careful study of all who would gain an insight into any Hindu system.

3. Tiruvāçagam (Lyric XV 9-12) refers to this part of the legend. He does not name the devotee, but the reference is obvious. This is one of very many stanzas that would be unintelligible but for the key which a knowledge of the legend puts into our hands.

4. The idea is one expressed with marvellous energy and beauty by Hebrew prophets (Micah vi.6-8) Horace's lines will occur to the student:-

'Immunis aram si tetigit manus.

Non sumptuosa blandior hostia

Mollivit aversos Penates

Farre Pioet saliente mica.'

'If the votary's hands are pure, they propitiate the gods with the humblest offering, and would not be more persuasive with the costliest'.

A This name was given to him during his christening. Ed.

B Lord Siva exclaimed: "Stay Kaṇṇ-appa!" This was repeated by ~~him~~ thrice. Ed

THE LEGEND OF CAṆḌĒCUVAR

NĀYANĀR:

THE YOUNG BRĀHMAN COWHERD.

In a town in the Çoṛa country, called Cēyñāl, a Brāhman boy was born, whose name was Viçāra-çāṇṇar, who from his earliest days instinctively understood the whole Çaiva creed; so that when the sages came to instruct him he met them with the recitation of the essential doctrines of the system, which he had grasped by a divine intuition. It may be permitted to repeat the articles of his creed, as these are summed up in the legend: 'All souls are from everlasting fast bound in the chains of impurity. To destroy that impurity, and to give to these souls infinite felicity and eternal release, He who is eternal is revealed. He performs the five Acts of creation, preservation, destruction, "envelopment", and gracious deliverance. He is the one Lord (PATHI), who possesses the eight attributes of absolute independence, purity of form, spontaneous understanding, absolute knowledge, natural freedom from all bonds, infinite grace, endless might, and boundless blessedness.

His name is Çivan, the Great Lord. He performs his gracious acts by putting forth the energy (ÇATTI), who, as a person is one with Him, and is therefore the divine Mother of all, as He is the divine Father, and must with Him be loved and worshipped. Nor can we say 'we will do this in some future birth', for we are born here as human beings for this and no other

purpose ; and the human form in the infinite series of transmigrations is hard to attain unto. Nor should we defer till to-morrow our dedication of ourselves, since we know not the day of our death. Therefore must we avail ourselves of Çivan's gift of grace, studying the sacred Āgamas and other works, without doubting. or commingling of perverse interpretation. This is the WAY of life!

One day, together with his school companions, he went down to the bank of the river where the village cows were grazing in charge of a man of the herdsman caste. This rustic, having no sense of right and wrong, beat one of the cows with a stick; but Viçāra-çarumar was vehemently stirred by this outrage and rushing up to him in great wrath, restrained him from striking the sacred animal: 'know you not', said he, 'that cows have come down from the world of Çivan to this earth? in their members the gods, the sages, and the sacred purifying stream dwell.

The five products of these sacred creatures are the sacred unguents of Çivan. And the ashes which are the adornment of the God and his devotees are made from their refuse!' Dwelling upon this idea he conceived a desire to devote himself entirely to the task of herding and caring for the troop of sacred cows; and accordingly sent away the rustic, who reverentially departed. And thus our hero became a self-dedicated Brāhman herdsman. As such he easily obtains permission of all the Brāhman of the town to take charge of their kine; and daily along the bank of the beautiful river Manni, he leads forth his troop in the grassy glades and green pastures, allowing them peacefully to graze their fill, and supplying them

for his household worship; and then at evening, leaving each cow at its owner's door, he goes to his home.

While things went on in this manner, the cows increased daily in beauty, waxed fat, were joyous and by day and night poured forth abundant streams of milk for their owners. The Brāhmaṇas found that they had more milk than formerly for their offerings, and were glad. The cows, tended with such unvarying solicitude, were brisk and cheerful, and though separated for awhile from their calves that remained tied up in the houses, grieved not a whit, but with joy awaited the coming of their young herdsman following him gladly, crowding around him like tender mothers, and lowing joyfully at the sound of his voice. The youthful Brāhmaṇ, seeing the exuberance of their milk, reflected that this was a fitting unction for the head of the God; and conceiving a great desire so to employ it, constructed a **lingam** of earth on a little mound beneath the sacred Atti tree on the bank of the river, and built around it a miniature temple with tower and walls. He then plucked suitable flowers, and with them adorning the image, procured some new vessels of clay, and took from each of the cows a little milk, with which he performed the unction prescribed for the divine emblem (the **Lingam**): and Çivan, the Supreme, looked down and received with pleasure the boy-shepherd's guileless worship. All essentials of the sacred service he supplied by the force of his imagination. Though this was done daily, the supply of milk in the Brāhmaṇ's dairy was no whit diminished.

B4



For a long time this continued, until some malicious person saw what was going on, and told it to the Brāhmins in the village, who convened an assembly before which they summoned the boy's father, and told him that his son Viçāra-çarumar was wasting the milk of the Brāhmins' sacred cows by pouring it idly on the earth in sport. The father feared greatly when he heard the accusation, but protested his entire ignorance of the waste and desecration, and asking pardon, engaged to put a stop to his son's eccentric practices. Accordingly the next day he went forth to watch the boy's proceedings, and hid himself in a thicket on the bank of the river. He soon saw his little son ceremoniously bathe in the river, and then proceed to his miniature temple gathering sacred flowers and leaves, arranging everything in order for the minutiae of Çiva-worship, and then pouring a stream of anointing milk over the earthen LIṄGAM. Thus convinced of the truth of the accusation, he was greatly incensed, and rushing forth from his concealment inflicted severe blows upon the boy, and used many reproachful words. But the young devotee's mind was so absorbed in the worship, so full of the rapture of mystic devotion, that he neither perceived his father's presence, nor heard his words, nor felt his blows. Still more incensed by the boy's insensibility, the infatuated father raised his foot, broke the vessels of consecrated milk, and destroyed the whole apparatus of worship! This was too much for the young enthusiast to bear; the god of his adoration was insulted, and the sacred worship defiled.

He regarded not the fact that it was his father, a Brāhman and a guru, who was the offender; but only saw the heinous sin and insult to Çivan. So with the staff in

his hands he aimed a blow at the offender's feet, as if to cut them off; and behold, the shepherd's staff became in his hands the Sacred Axe of Çivan, and the father fell maimed and dying to the ground. The enthusiastic boy then went on with his worship as if nothing had occurred, but the Lord Çivan, with Umā the goddess, riding on the sacred White Bull, immediately appeared hovering in the air. The young devotee prostrated himself before the holy vision in an ecstasy of joy; when the Supreme One took him up in his divine arms, saying, 'For my sake thou hast smitten down the father that begat thee. Henceforth **'I alone am thy father'**, and embracing him stroked his body with His sacred hand, and kissed him on the brow.

The form of the child thus touched by the divine hand shone forth with ineffable lustre, and the God further addressed him thus: 'Thou shalt become the chief among my servants, and to thee shall be given all the offerings of food and flowers that my worshipers on Kailāṣa's mountain present! His name thereupon became Caṇḍeṣuvarar ('the impetuous Lord').^A The manifested God finally took the mystic cassia-wreath from His Own head, and with it crowned the youthful saint. And so he ascended to heaven with Çivan, and was exalted to that divine rank. The father, too, who had been guilty in his ignorance of such impiety to the God, and had been punished by the hand of his own son, was forgiven, restored, and with the whole family passed into Çivan's abode of bliss.

A. This meaning maugre its quaintness is etymologically justifiable.

TIRUGNANA SAMBANDHAR.

The Sage whose name is probably dearest to the whole Tamil people is known by the title of Thiru Gnana Sambandhar. His reputed poetical effusions have all the authority and sanctity of Vedas. His history fills the Second Kandam of the 'Great Legendary History',^A and is given in 1,256 quatrains or 5,000 lines.

In the collection of the DEVARAM (hymns composed by the three great devotees) 384 are ascribed to him. These consist of eleven quatrains each, the eleventh always containing the poet's name.

He seems to have been, though a mere boy, nearly the greatest leader in the 2nd Saiva revival, and from his days the Buddhists and Jains disappear from South Indian history. The legends are very remarkable, and illustrate many phases of Hindu thought and feeling

(His date is a matter of dispute; but it can hardly be later than the ninth century A.D. (See articles by Professor P. Sundaram Pillai in Madras Christian College Magazine, November 1891, etc.)^B

Thiru Gnana Sambandhar was born in Sri-Kazhi (Shiyali) or Brahmapuram, a celebrated old city about thirty-eight miles north-east of Kumbakonam, in the Tanjore district. His parents were of ancient Brahmanical race, rigid Saivites, holding aloof from every other worship and system, of which it seems there were at that time many actively propagated around them. The wonders of his history begin with his third year. Having come

to earth direct from Siva's presence, though born a human child, he had vague reminiscences of his ancient home, and not unfrequently sobbed and wept with an instinctive longing for his divine Master. One day his human father went to the Temple to perform his duties as usual and the child, with an unconscious yearning for his divine Father's presence rushed after him, and could not be induced to return to the house. So the father perforce took him to the Temple, and left the little boy on the steps of the tank while he performed the daily ceremonies. When he had gone down into the water the child, missing him, tottered back into the shrine sobbing and looking towards the image on the sacred bull and cried, 'O father ; O Mother !' The God heard the feeble words, came down to the child, and bade Uma give him some milk from her breast in a golden cup. This the goddess did, and—she is the manifested energy of Siva's transcendental Being, his SATTI, fountain and source of action, grace and knowledge—she mingled supernal wisdom with the draught ; wiped away his tears, and with soothing words gave him the cup. The child drank of it and became at once an inspired sage, absolutely and for ever consecrated to Siva, in consequence of which he received the epithet of ALU AIYA PILLAIYAR (the god's own child') and THIRU G JANA SAMBANDHAR (he who is conjoined with divine wisdom').

As many legends show, manicka Vachakar and Suntharar had their calls, being miraculously-each in a different manner-made the absolute servants of the god and

this was Sambandhar's call, like Samuel's! The legend points to a peculiar temperament and great precocity in the child; and has its foundation in this wonderful genius

Meanwhile, the father, having finished his ablutions, came up out of the tank, and perceived the child with radiant face, and lips bearing traces of the food of which he had partaken. 'Who has polluted you', asked he 'with impure food' and threatened to beat the child, who with sobs pointed up to where in the firmament he saw the receding form of the God, and for answer burst out into a sacred lyric, still extant of praise. The father could not see the vision; but recognised its reality; and with ecstasies of gladness embraced the child, who continued to sing his wondrous hymn. From that time he lisped in numbers and his father carried him as a prodigy from shrine while he sang, at each, appropriate stanzas.

The fame of the miraculous endowments of the wonderful child spread throughout the whole country, and deputations were sent to ask him to visit each holy place. His songs are preserved. The next great incident, however, took place on the day following this wonderful visitation, when as he was singing and beating time with his hand, by the grace of Siva cymbals of gold inscribed with the mystic five letters were miraculously given into his hands, and with them he kept time to his song. Soon after this he set out on his first circuit, embracing all the neighbouring towns, and on the way was met as he was borne on his father's shoulders, by a musician with a lute carried by a young maiden vocalist. The name is celebrated in these legends, though it is only an epithet.

TIRU-NILA KANDA PERUM PANAR ('Sivan's great

minstrel')^D. From that time forth this musician with the young songstress, accompanied him in all his journeyings, and we are to picture to ourselves an assembly in the courts of each of hundreds of temples which he visited, consisting of the youthful bard (for at his advanced assumption he cannot have been more than twelve years of age), his father, a band of Brahmans in the full equipment of Siva devotees, with his minstrel playing on the lute (YAZH), while the chorus is sung by the young maiden^E. These hymns and the music had a profound and permanent effect upon the Tamil people; though, as a foreigner can judge, his hymns are by no means of a higher order—far inferior to those of Manicka Vachakar, who seems to have lived about a century earlier.^F

His second journey was to Chidambaram, where he was altogether overwhelmed by the place and its associations. He is said on one occasion to have beheld in mystic vision the three thousand devotees of sacred Tillai in their transfigured state as the glorified hosts of Siva. From thence he went on his way, visiting the Siva shrine and towns on the bank of the river, and in this his second journey would not allow his father to carry him on his shoulder as before, but performed the journey on foot, surrounded by Brahmans, and singing his Master's praise, the result of which was that on one occasion at nightfall weary and footsore, but pronouncing ever the five mystic syllables, he arrived at a village called MARANADI, (மரநாடி) where he passed the night. Meanwhile Sivan had noted these sufferings of his sacred son, and in the night sent a vision to each one of the Brahmans in a

neighbouring temple, bidding them repair instantly to their shrine where they would find a litter inlaid with pearls, with an umbrella or Canopy of State similarly adorned, and the conch-shells on which the greatness of the Devotee might be sounded forth and with all the other ornaments be'onging to the stately progress of a Siva Devotee of the very highest order. These they were to convey to the young poet, and present them to him in the name of the God. The divinity appeared in vision to Gnana Sambandhar himself also, telling him to receive and use the litter and paraphernalia which would arrive in the morning. This may be looked upon as the inauguration of the child, then six or seven years old, as the great GURU of the Siva faith. When, for the first time he was borne aloft in state at Thiru-Aratturrai, there was the usual commotion on earth and in heaven; flowers were showered down, celestial music was heard, and proclamation was made that the flawless gem of the Siva faith had come; that he was the Sage who had been fed with the milk of wisdom by the goddess Uma, who fills the Universe with her light and glory; and that his mission was to teach the Agamas and all divine knowledge in the Tamil tongue. It was this (on the whole successful) cultivation of the vernacular that gave to these poets of the Tamil Renaissance their great and permanent influence.

He now returned home to Sri Kazhi from his second tour, and was met by the whole population of the city, and received with more than royal honours, while his mother Bhāgavati (the blessed Lady) came and paid him reverence to which he responded

lovingly, and was received once more into his home. And now he was of the age to receive the investiture of the sacred cord, the second birth of the higher castes. On that occasion the ministering Brahmans uttered the mystic formula, 'We give thee authority over the four Vedas', and were proceeding to reveal to him the sacred mysteries but he opened his mouth and unprompted chanted forth the text of the Vedas with their subsidiary sciences, and every species of mystical and sacred lore. They bowed in astonished joy before the inspired youth, who graciously quieted their excitement, and sang some sacred verses of which we shall give an abstract in the sequel.

Next comes a renowned visitation paid him by one whose history is given in the same Purana, and who is scarcely less famous than our hero: THIRUNAVUKKARASU NAYANAR, or as he is generally called, Appa Murti. Appa Murti, must at that time have been in the prime of life with the established reputation but the deference he ever, without a touch of jealousy, paid to his boyish teacher, is very remarkable. He now came attracted by the reputation of the youthful prodigy, and soon afterwards they set out together on a visitation which was intended to include all the Siva Shrines in the Tamil country. On this occasion he begged his father to remain at home to which he replied, 'You are my only and most precious son, and for some days yet I need not separate from you'—and so accompanied them. And now, in a certain town on the northern bank of the river Kaveri there was a yeoman whose daughter was afflicted by what seemed to be described as demoniac possession. They brought her to

the shrine and left her there, while the father hastened to throw himself at the feet of the Saint, imploring assistance. Our hero descended from his litter, raised the suppliant from the ground, went into the temple, walked round it, entered the shrine, saw the maiden lying there, and was told of her grievous suffering. Full of compassion, he worshipped the God, and, in a very touching, simple hymn, implored Him to heal the child. Immediately the maiden's disease was removed, and she, arising, clung to her father's side. Great was their gladness. The youthful Saint now proceeded to the regions south of the Kaveri. The rains were over and it was the time of heavy dews, while fever and ague were rife. His attendants came and represented this to him. He immediately sang a sacred hymn, and the fever left the whole country side. The sage then went southward.

During the same year, he went through a large number of villages adjacent to the banks of the Kaveri and in the months of June and July, when the temperature is often terrifically hot, the youthful devotee suffered exceedingly, and the legend relates that Siva feeling pity for his beloved son, sent down at Patteecharam from Mount Kailasa a canopy of pearls, which was brought by a heavenly messenger with the words, 'The Lord hath sent this unto thee'. The youthful Saint fell on his face and adored, while his attendants bore over him the canopy thus miraculously supplied and under the refreshing shade, he went on his way to pay his homage at the shrine in the neighbourhood. The poet says the sacred teacher henceforth abode happily under the shadow of the sacred feet of the Lord of all the worlds.

sum of money was needed. When
his wont, hastened to the temple, and there sang one of
his most renowned hymns. It begins:-

‘In trouble and in weakness, and when pain

Afflicts I seek thy feet and worship thee?’

The result was that a divine messenger arrives with what seems to have been a golden chain of many links, which renewed itself as the links, were broken off and was thus an unfailing treasure, like the widow's cruise of oil. This he gave to his father bidding him first offer a sumptuous sacrifice to Siva and then to supply the needs of all the devout inhabitants of Sri Kazhi. The father went home rejoicing, and the young devotee proceeded on his way, worshipping and singing sacred hymns to the accompaniment of the minstrel's lute (yazh), at every shrine. These hymns are rhythmical praises of the God, under all the names and with all the attributes and forms recognised in the Saiva books; but they rarely contain anything worthy of special notice.¹¹ The next incident of interest is connected with the town of Dharmapuram, where his minstrel's mother and other relatives dwelt. There, surrounded by the admiring kindred, the minstrel played his choicest tunes, and sang over all the lyrics that his master had composed, while they exclaimed that his melody would for ever sound throughout the world. Now the Tamil word that signifies 'melody' bears also the signification of renown. Hearing their praises, and fearing to

appropriate to himself the glory that belonged only to his youthful master and to the god he went and threw himself at the poet's feet, begging him to compose some verses which should be so sublime that it would be out of his power to fit them with an accompaniment. The poet instantly sang a lyric in very irregular metre, to which when the minstrel tried to play an accompaniment he failed utterly, and was so overwhelmed with humiliation that he was about to break his lute on the ground; but Sambandhar took the lute and said to him: 'O Brahman,^I why should'st thou break thy lute? Can the praises of Siva the Supreme, and of Parvathi the mother be measured by the strings of this instrument? Can the greatness of their glory be measured by the execution of thy hand? Take thy lute, and play thy simple melodies with contented mind, praising as best thou art able.' The humbled minstrel took his lute, bowed his head, and retired.

Perhaps, he needed a lesson in that sweet unconscious humility that seemed to be not the least of the youthful devotee's admirable qualities. And now the poet is brought into closer connexion with several of the Siva devotees, of whom there seems to have been a succession from the time of Manicka Vachakar.^J These all seem to have regarded him with the profoundest reverence and affection. It is a sweet picture - the child among the doctors.^K We have seen it elsewhere!

About this time he is said to have raised a Brahman Merchant from the dead.^L One day, came there to meet him a devotee called Muruga Nayanar who was renowned for his devotion to the temples of Siva, which he always

supplied with four species of flowers-those from trees, those from creepers, those from the water, and those from the ground-weaving them into choice garlands. (The Saiva system affords scope for men of all tastes in the performance of their devotions). He then came to Arun where the great teacher Appa Murti,^M again joined him, and they made a prolonged tour, and were met on the way by another devotee-whose history we may recount by and by-whose speciality it was to spend all his substance in providing incense for Siva's altars

At this time a deputation from home arrived, imploring him to return and give his own people the advantage of his presence. He hesitated, longing to behold his master's glory, as he had seen it in that much loved shrine; but the god appeared to him in a dream, coming from Nilasam in a heavenly chariot, and showed him all His glory as he had seen it when a little child. The next morning he dismissed the messengers, telling them that the God revealed His glory everywhere.

Now came a famine and the whole country was desolate. But the God appeared to Sambandhar and Appa Murti, bidding them go to the temple the one to the eastern altar, the other to the western each day-where they would find coins sufficient for the day. They did this, and established themselves in two separate monasteries in the east and west, and fed daily all that came to them. At length the rains fell, the fields were covered with crops, and all living things again rejoiced! And now comes the famous episode of the Gates of Vetharanyam. These temple gates had been closed so that none could open

them, from the time that in the most ancient days the last verse of the Vedas had been sung there. None had ever succeeded in opening them. Appa Murti now sang a verse which had the effect of opening them, and afterwards Sambandhar sang another which shut them. So from that time forward these verses have always been sung for the opening and shutting of the principal gates of this temple.

We come now to something nearer to authentic history.

While the two Siva apostles remained in Vetharanyam, an embassy arrived from Madura. There the Jains had obtained absolute sway. The king known in history at first as Kun-Pandiyan, or the Hump-backed, and afterwards as Suntharan (the beautiful), had become a convert to that system; and as the legend says, 'like king, like people', so the country was over-run with devotees, described as men with heads from which every hair had been plucked, whose mouths were defiled, who carried an eating vessel in a noose, who wore a bunch of peacock feathers in their hands, whose garment was a mat whose bodies like their minds were impure, who ate their food standing, and whose loins were ungirt. This is an enemy's picture of them, but probably not quite unfaithful. But the apostate king's wife was a daughter of the Chola king, who remained faithful to her ancestral religion. Her name was Mangaiyarkkarasi 'the Queen of Women'. She is canonised as a Siva saint. The prime minister of the kingdom also a Siva saint, whose name was 'The Bond of the Clan' (Kula-chiraiyar). These two secretly performed the rites of the Siva faith and

trustworthy messengers, unknown to the king, to invite Sambandhar to visit their city.

The youthful Saint received the envoys courteously and at once determined to accompany them: but Appa Murti represented the danger of the expedition, and tried to dissuade his colleague from undertaking it. Sambandhar answered him by a poem which so impressed him that he declared his intention of accompanying the saint. 'No,' said Sambandhar, your province is in Chola land. Here remain, while I am called to a mission in the Pandiyan kingdom'. So Appa Murti unwillingly remained behind, and the young apostle with the pompous paraphernalia as a Siva guru, chanting ever the mystic five syllables, set out on his progress—the greatest expedition of his life—to Madura. The heretics on all their eight hills were terrified by evil omens and frightful dreams, and came together to Madura to tell one another of the dread that overwhelmed them. At the approach of him whose name was afterwards to be renowned as destroyer of jains, they warned the King, and prepared for the contest. The Queen and the prime minister on the other hand, were cheered with good omens and encouraging dreams, and foreseeing the destruction of the heretics and the revival of the true faith, were exceedingly glad. Hearing the Saint's approach, the prime minister went forth to meet him, and conducted him to the great but now neglected shrine of Siva, where the queen awaited his arrival. He entered with an amazing pomp of attending devotees, while the sacred shells resounded his praises and proclaimed that the destroyer of heresies had arrived. By

the care of the Queen, he was accommodated within a fitting pavilion; and thence went forth to survey the city and all its edifices, once so sacred, and at eventide returned in state to his pavilion.

The Jain devotees could endure it no longer. but presented themselves before the King with sad countenance. 'Why are you so sad?' said he. 'Your majesty, this day into your royal city of Madura the Saiva Brahman child from Srikazhi in the Chola land, reputed to have received divine wisdom, has arrived, borne aloft in a litter inlaid with pearls, with his attendant devotees, to conquer us in argument; and we are resolved by our magic incantations to burn him in his pavilion. He shall either flee or be consumed'. 'So do', said the bewildered King, and in great perturbation, sought his chamber. The Queen saw his distress, inquired its cause, and was told the whole affair. She replied: 'Lord of my life, be not angry; if both parties hold a disputation, we will listen, and join ourselves, as is fitting, to the conquering side'. The King assented, and his excitement was calmed. The Jain devotees were not idle. By their machinations the Saint's pavilion was set on fire. But can any evil charms. prevail against those who devoutly chant the mystic 'five syllables?' The fire refused to burn. The Jains, confounded and in despair, now set fire to the building on all sides. Sambandhar, of course, was unharmed by the flames, which he quenched with sacred verses;^o but thinking that the king was the author of the treachery, he prayed and sent a burning plague into the frame of the king, who was soon in extreme agony from a consuming fever. The Queen and prime minister hastened to him the court physicians came and administered

remedies, but the fever increased until the king lay at the point of death. The jain devotees now gathered around, stroked the patient with their peacock feathers, muttered charms, and exhausted all their arts; but the holy water they sprinkled fell upon the agonised patient as flames of fire, till he cried, 'All of you begone', and fell senseless. The prime minister, remembering that the Lord Siva had in the old time burnt the three towns of the guilty Asurar, and had therefore doubtless in like manner sent this fever to avenge his servant, caused the holy stranger to be sent for; and when the name of Sambandhar was pronounced in the King's ear his faintness left him and thinking by a holy inspiration that the Saint alone could relieve his sufferings, he exclaimed, 'Call the sacred Gnana Sambandhar hither, I will become the adherent of him who shall heal my disease'. The Queen was overjoyed and with all her ladies, attended by the prime minister and nobles, repaired to the Saint's lodging, and implored him to come to their aid, telling him the whole story. Sambandhar came forth and saying, 'I must first know the will of the God', repaired to the shrine of Chokkanathar and singing a sacred lyric, received permission to go forth to silence and destroy the heretics and glorify the name of Siva. Then, ascending his litter with solemn pomp, the loud voices of the heralds sounding out, he proceeded towards the palace, while the Queen in her royal chariot came behind and the faithful prime minister led the way to the presence of the afflicted King. The Jains also came, and the king repeated his resolve that he would become the adherent of the party that healed him. It was now arranged that the Jains should take one side of the King, and Sambandhar the other, and exert their skill to quench the fever. It is

recorded that at this juncture the Queen's faith for a moment failed her, and she exclaimed: 'The Saint is but a child: these Jains are an innumerable company; let us leave to God Himself the healing of the King!' But the King persisted in the experiment, and the Saint replied: 'Great Queen, fear not because I am but a child; while the God of Madura's shrine lives, I shall not fall beneath the power of these heretics'. And he added a lyric addressed to her which is both simple and touching

The Jains took the left side; but the more diligently they manipulated, the more fiercely raged the fever till the agonised King turned to the Saint, who sang his celebrated Tiruneetruppadikam (திருநீற்றுப்பதிகம்) and with his sacred hand stroked the King's right side, which at once became cool as the sacred waters of the temple

‘மந்திர மாவது நீறு வானவர் மேலது நீறு
சுந்தர மாவது நீறுதுதிக்குப் படுவது நீறு
தந்திர மாவது நீறு சமயத்தி லுள்ளது நீறு
செந்துவர் வாயுமை பங்கள் திருவால வாயான் திருநீறே’

The jains now stood aloof, leaving the King's left side still suffering, when the Saint, at the King's desire, sprinkled it also with the sacred ashes - and, the King who was entirely healed, rose up from his couch, and, with worshipping hands lifted above his head, prostrated himself, crying, 'In the presence of these Jains, saved by the grace of Thiru Gnana Sambandhar, I bow at his sacred feet'. But the Jain Gurus required that he should overcome them in argument also; and it was resolved at their request that their respective systems should be tested by fire and by water. Each party threw into the fire a palm leafscroll, inscribed

with the assertion of the fundamental tenet of its faith. The Jain scroll was at once consumed to ashes; the Saiva scroll came forth—a fresh green leaf, with every letter clearer than before. They then repaired to the banks of the Vaigai, and threw their scrolls into the stream. The Jain scroll was carried away so swiftly towards the sea that they were unable to recover it, while the Saint's leaf swam up against the stream, cutting through the water; and when the King, at length convinced, reiterated the words inscribed on it—'Sivan is supreme', — his hump disappeared, and he was afterwards known as Sundarapandian (Pandian, the beautiful). And now came the punishment of the Jains. They had contrived mischief against the Saint, had been the cause of the King's suffering, and now stood forth convicted imposters. They were sentenced to be impaled, and, through the zeal of the faithful prime minister, 8,000 of them suffered that terrible punishment. Some such slaughter on a very large scale doubtless took place, and the fact is still commemorated in Madura. The result of all this was, that the King and all his people returned to the Saiva faith; and the youthful Saint departed from the city amidst the acclamations of the multitude.

Before he left Madura, his father arrived from Srikazhi, to witness and share his son's triumph. He now made a progress through the South, as far as Ramesvaram. As he was returning, the floods had so risen on one occasion that it seemed impossible for him to cross, but he fearlessly embarked, with all his attendants, in the boat, which, by the power of his word carried them safely across.^P Before he finally left the southern land, he received a promise from the King that he would ever uphold and maintain the

Saiva faith. In one of his journeys he came to Tellicherry and there encountered some Buddhists, when his attendants, with shell and trumpet and loud acclamations, proclaimed that the lion-like destroyer of heresy was at hand. The leader of the heretics, who was a renowned scholar hearing this proclamation, was exceedingly wrath and made his way into the presence of the Saint, exclaiming: 'You should first overcome us in argument, and then make a proclamation in this sort'. A great conflict arose, in the midst of which the legend says that at the recitation of the mystic 'Five Syllables', the head of the opposing champion fell from his body, and his adherents fled, after which the Saint sent for their other leaders and held a dispute with them, in the course of which they were convinced, acknowledged the falsity of their system, and became good devotees of Siva. The agent in this discussion is represented to have been one of the writers or transcribers of the Saint's verses. He now returned and was met on his way by his old friend and companion, Appa murti, who hearing of his approach, mingled with the throng, and humbly assisted in bearing the litter. When the procession neared the village, Sambandhar inquired where Appa Murti was, upon which the latter Saint came forth, and fell at his feet. Instantly alighting from his litter, Sambandhar embraced him, and with great joy they entered the shrine together — the one relating the wonders of his Pandian expedition, the other telling how he had gone from village to village in the Tondai land. From thence the youthful Saint went home to Sri Kazhi, but did not remain there long. His next expedition was a tour throughout the Tondai land. There a devotee met him who

complained that all the palmyra trees he planted were sterile, and that the heretics around ridiculed him as a faithful worshipper of Siva; whereupon, Sambandhar sang a lyric, which had the effect of converting the palmyra forest into a fruitful one. In this expedition he visited the neighbourhood of Karaikal;^Q but it is said that, fearing to plant his feet where the Lady of Karaikal had formerly walked on her head, he turned aside, and passed on to Kalahasti-renowned in the history of Kannappa Nayanar-and worshipped before the shrine where that worthy is installed on the right hand of the Divinity whom he so honoured and loved. The histories of those two have been given. (See Indian Magazine and Review. May 1895 and Jan 1896). They evidently belonged to a generation or two preceding this period.^R He then returned to Mailapur, now St. Thome, the traditional home of several great poets. There dwelt at that time a wealthy merchant called Sivanesar (Friend of Siva), who had heard much of the Sage; and night and day was occupied in his praises. This wealthy person had but one child, a daughter of incomparable beauty, then just twelve years old, who had been given to him as the reward of much prayer and devotion. The father was so full of admiration for the Saint that he had often declared to his family that he himself, his daughter, and his illimitable wealth all belonged to the Saint, and that to give her in marriage to him was the great desire of his soul. Meanwhile, at the very time when the Saint was in Kalahasti, a venomous serpent bit the poor girl as she was disporting herself in the flower garden near her chamber. Physicians in vain tried to cure her and the beautiful PUM-PAVAI (Flower maiden) died.

The father at first inconsolable flung himself upon her corpse, but recollecting that by his vow she belonged to the sacred servant of the god, he took a strange idea into his head. He cremated her body, put the ashes into an earthen pot which he placed in her chamber, covered it with rich garments and jewels, and sprinkled it with perfumes, and awaited there the expected visit of the Saint. His neighbours-friends and foes, Saivas and heretics-waited and wondered. When the Saint at length arrived at the neighbouring shrine of Tiruvotriyur, the bereaved father repaired thither, fell at his feet, and told him the whole story. Sambandhar was deeply affected, and promised at once to visit his town. The father caused a covered way to be constructed between the two towns, strewing the entire way with garments and adorning the whole with choice flowers and jewels. The Saint worshipped at the shrine, and then, surrounded with his company of devotees, in his usual state, arrived at Mailapur, and bade the father bring the vessel containing the maiden's ashes to the door of the temple, which was a very renowned one. He then, regarding the urn, addressed the maiden as follows: 'If it be true, O Pum-pavai, that they who have served Siva faithfully behold his presence in bliss, return thou now and make thyself visible to the children of earth'. He then sang one of his most beautiful lyrics, the burden of each verse of which is: 'Hast thou gone, O Pum-pavai, so that thou seest the solemn feast of the God no more?' In the ten verses of which it consists, all the great festivals of the temple are cleverly interwoven.

“மட்டிட்ட புன்னையங் கானன் மடமயிலைக்
கட்டிட்டங் கொண்டான் கபாலீச் சரமமர்த்தான்
ஒட்டிட்ட பணிபி னுருத்திர பல்கணத்தார் க்(கு)
அட்டிட்டல் காணுதே போதியோ பூம்பாவாய்”
— சம்பந்தர்

Like many other of these songs, if translated it would require so much illustration to make it intelligible to English readers that I refrain from attempting it here. It is a touching elegy, but contains no intimation of any miraculous occurrence. It is now said, however, that on the recitation of the first verse the dust in the vessel gathered itself together; at the second it assumed the form of the maiden; during the next eight verses, it grew to the stature of a maiden of twelve years old; but still remained concealed in its enclosure. The Saint then added the closing verse, when she thrust her hand forth, broke the vessel, and arose. There was the usual assemblage of gods and heavenly beings, with showering down of flowers, and strains of celestial music, while the faithful devotees of Sivan shouted aloud their joy, and Buddhists fled discomfited. The father took her by the hand, and, with her, bowed before Siva and before the Saint, and said to him "I give thee in marriage her whom thou hast brought back to life". "Nay" said the saint; "thāt cannot be; since she has been restored to life by my instrumentality she is my daughter, and can never be my wife". The Father sadly acquiesced and the maiden was reconducted to her virgin home, where the story says 'she gained the heaven of Siva', but the time and manner of her death are not given.

He now returned for the last time to Chidambaram, where his father met him with a troop of Brahmans from Sri Kazhi with whom he returned thither. There was a great gathering there of Saiva Saints of all orders, to whom the father said, 'It is now the time prescribed in the law for the marriage of my son'. To which they assented, but the Saint

steadfastly refused to be bound by any earthly bond. It was then represented to him that it was his duty to submit to the ordinances of his caste, at least as an example to others, and he gave way. A Brahman in the neighbouring town of Nallur, had a daughter whom with delight he consented to unite in marriage to the Saint. The arrangements for the marriage were made at once, and at the appointed auspicious time he proceeded in triumphant state as a bridegroom to the temple in Nallur, which ever afterwards bore the name of Tiru-manam (The Sacred Wedding). It would be wearisome to recount the glories of the scene. A Saint called TIRUNILA-NAKKA-NAYANAR performed the ceremony, and the young bridegroom tied the TALI, took his bride's hand, performed every prescribed ceremony, and entered with her into the innermost shrine where he sang his last song.

He then, before the image, addressed his assembled family and Saints in these words: 'Enter ye with me into this incomparable splendour, that the sorrows of mundane existence ye may know no more'. Obedient to his command they passed onwards - the Saints the father, the relatives, with wives and kindred, all those who had borne his litter and swelled the pomp of his progresses, men of all the perfect school, all of them - into the splendour of the infinite blessedness and closing the procession, the Saint and his bride were lost to mortal sight. Those who had beheld the glorious ascension from afar returned to their homes sorrowing that they were left behind.

A) The word 'legendary' is to be understood in its etymological sense. Ed.

- B) Our saint flourished during the 7th century A. D. Ed.
- C) The child was then on the bank of the tank. Ed.
- D) The name is truly a proper name. Ed.
- E) The Paanar couple always stayed without the temple. Ed.
- F) Pope's comment is a classical proof of the maxim which says : " Comparisons are odious ". Maanickāvaachakar flourished much later in point of time. Ed.
- G) It was a purse, not a chain. Ed.
- H) Obviously Pope had missed their significance. Ed.
- I) The word 'Aiyar' which in the context means 'noble one' is thus translated by Pope. Ed.
- J) Pope follows an erroneous chronology.
- K) The word doctor means : "a learned man".
- L) A Vaisya and not a Brahman.
- M) The narration here is erroneous.
- N) The entire history of our saint is true as well as authentic.
- O) Erroneous narration.
- P) The word is Panchaakshara. The incident took place in the realm.
- Q) The place is Tiruvaalangkaadu, not Karaikkaal.
- R) They flourished several centuries ago.

THE LIFE AND LEGENDS OF SUNDARA-MURTI NAAYANAAR

The great Sages of the Caiva sect in the South of India are four in number. Of these Manikkavacagar is the oldest and incomparably the greatest.^A At an interval of probably a century arose Gnana Sambandhar, Sundarar and Appamurti.^B These three lived in the time of the great struggle between the Jains and Caivites, which ended in favour of the latter.

The story of Sundarar begins before his appearance in South India. He was one of the host of Civa in Kailasam, -(on the silver hill)-his name being Halala-Sundara (an epithet of Siva ; TIRUVACAGAM, XII. 9), and was one of the especial favourites of Siva. One day as he was walking in the flower garden belonging to the goddess, he saw two maidens, attendants upon Parvathi, or Uma, who were plucking flowers for her garland. He immediately became enamoured of the lovely damsels, and in a state of great bewilderment presented himself before his master, who at once recognised the fact that evil desires and passions were alive in his servant's soul. He accordingly told him that, because it was so, he must descend to earth and be born a man in the southern land, where he can in due time marry the girls with whom he is in love, they having also been sent down to sojourn on earth. Sundarar adores his master and says, 'Our Lord, since I have yielded to evil impulses that must for a time separate me

from Thy sacred feet, when I am on earth deign at times to appear to me, and keep me ever Thy faithful servant and devotee'.

This, Sivan promises to do, - and so Sundarar quits for a time the bliss of Paradise, to expiate (very strangely) his sin.

His birth and early history

There is a district in the Southern Tamil country named Tirumunaipadi, and a town in it called Navalur. In this village lived a Caiva devotee whose name was Cadaiyanar and his wife, a most virtuous and saintly woman, was called Icai-gnaniyar. He was born as the son of this worthy pair. When but a child, he attracted by his beauty the attention of the king of the district, who begged him from his father and brought him up as his own son. This did not however prevent him from observing all Brahmanical usages, and from reading the sacred Vedas. He thus grew up both an accomplished courtier and a learned sage. When the time came for his marriage his parents arranged for his union with an unexceptionable bride, and on the appointed day in great state he repaired to the bride's house, for the performance of the marriage ceremonies. At that time Civan, ever mindful of his servant, and cognizant of all deeds and of all events, came down from Kailasam to fulfil his promise, and presenting himself in the marriage-hall disguised as a poor Civa mendicant,^c addressed the brahman ministrant with the words: 'This marriage cannot proceed, for I have a complaint to make, and a claim to urge. The bridegroom

is my slave, and was sold to me by his grandsire. The deed of sale with signature is here.' To this Sundarar naturally replied, 'Was it ever known that a brahman was sold as a slave to another brahman? Go, madman'. 'The disguised god replies: 'Whether I be a madman or a demon matters not. Abuse me to thy heart's content; but the suit is not so settled, nor my claim refuted.' It may be observed that, Madman is the phrase continually applied to Civan as the wandering mendicant. This occurs frequently in the Sacred songs of the ascetics (Cf. note I to Tiruvachagam and 5). A great dispute hereupon arose, in the course of which the unknown mendicant exhibited a document purporting to be a deed executed by Sundarar's grandfather making over himself with his entire clan to the Brahman as his absolute slaves. This deed Sundarar indignantly pronounces to be an absurd forgery^D for 'no Brahman can ever be a slave'; and tears up the document. The claimant now appeals to the village council, and Sundarar is compelled to accompany the disguised god thither to defend the suit. After much talk the original document is produced, and the signature of the grandfather verified! The bond ran thus 'I, Aruran, a Caivite of the original stock dwelling in Tiru-Navalur, make this agreement with the "Madman," who resides in Vennai-Nal ur; myself and my posterity agree to give ourselves up to him, inwardly and outwardly, as his hereditary bondsman.' 'Upon the exhibition of his bond the question arises whether the claimant was really a householder in the village,^E for no one seemed to know either him or his dwelling place. When the question was propounded to him he bade them follow him, and conducted them to the celebrated Civa

temple in the neighbourhood, entering which he was finally lost to view. The astounded brahmans now perceive that the claimant was their god, and that the document simply asserted what every true Caivite would gladly acknowledge: that outwardly and inwardly he and all his race belong to Civa, the Supreme Blessedness! It is indeed Sundarar's divine master who has come down from Kailasam, has assumed this form, and resorted to this stratagem to assert and make manifest his eternal sovereignty over his servant.

Sundarar now understands it all, and rushes into the temple where stands the image of Civa with Parvathi his bride, conjoined. Addressing this he says 'I recognise Thee, and acknowledge Thy claim, O my Master' The god replies: 'Before, whilst thou wert my servant on the silver hill, thou didst permit thy soul to swerve from its fidelity to me, and I sent thee down to earth to rid thee of the stain.^F I have now interfered to prevent thee from entering into bonds which would entangle thy soul, and make thee more and more of the earthy.' The extatic rapture of Sundarar here finds expression in the poet's flowing verses, which are more copious than interesting, or (to us) edifying.^G Civan replies, 'In the dispute thou hast used mighty words against me, even calling me 'Madman' and 'Deceiver': thou shalt hence-forth be called 'the mighty devotee', and shalt mightily praise and serve me in these Tamil lands. Go forth therefore, and sing my praises in ever loving and lovely song. Song shall be thy worship.'^H Thus commissioned, the sage goes forth to be one of the four great Saiva psalmists.

Sundarar's pilgrimages

It would be tedious to trace all the various pilgrimages which henceforward occupied the time of our sage. He visited

every Saiva shrine from Cithambaram to Shiyali, and it is mentioned that he refrained from entering the latter town because it was the birthplace of the renowned Gnana Sambandhar. This certainly is an odd reason for avoiding it, and seems to indicate a fear of being considered a rival of Sambandhar^G. I infer too that this date was some little time after the two other saints, Sambandhar and Appa Murti. Some of his experiences are sufficiently grotesque^G: for example, he once came to a place called Tiru Vathigai, where he laid himself down to sleep in the adjoining monastery porch. Soon an old brahman came in and stretched himself by Sundarar's side. Sometime afterwards, the sage was aroused from slumber by feeling this old brahman's feet pressing his head. He accordingly arose, rearranged his pallette, and again resigned himself to slumber; but again was roused by feeling the feet of his pertinacious old neighbour resting on his head! He now again arose and planted himself at right angles to the restless stranger and resigned himself once more to repose. Still however, whatever position he took up in a little while his slumbers were surely disturbed by the intrusive feet. On rising at length to expostulate, he heard a voice say: "Sundara! knowest thou me not?" But the old brahman had disappeared, and the sage knew now that his Master was fulfilling the promise he made to him on his quitting Kailasam.

His first marriage

Meanwhile one of the two damsels with whom he had been enamoured in Civan's paradise, and whose name was Kamalini, was sent down by Sivan to Arur, where she was

born as a dancing girl, and received the name of Paravaiyar. She there grew up to be a young maiden of exceeding beauty and accomplishment, and was in the habit of visiting the temple daily with her companions, there to sing the praise of the God. On one of these occasions she was seen by Sundarar, and although they did not recognise one another, the 'ancient flame' was felt by both of them. In order to arrange for their union, it is said that Civan himself came down and negotiated the marriage, such as it was.

At this period Sundarar settled down to a quiet domestic life with Paravaiyar, and obtained great renown in all the neighbourhood as a devotee whose prayers and benediction were of exceeding value. Some of the neighbouring villagers were in the habit of filling Paravaiyar's storehouses with paddy and pulse of every description and she was evidently a thrifty housewife. But famine came. The chief patron, if we may call him so, of Sundarar was a petty chieftain of Kundai, who on the failure of the crops appealed to Civa especially on behalf of the Saint to whom he could no longer send the accustomed largesses. In a dream the god promised relief, and next morning the town and adjacent hamlets were filled with piles of grain rising mountain-high. The difficulty now was how to convey them to Arur where Sundarar lived. When information reached him of the vast heaps of grain ready for him in Kundai he went to the temple and sang one of his celebrated decads, the refrain of which is: 'Bid these be lavishly poured forth for us.'

Civan accordingly sent his hosts at nightfall (reminding one of Robin Goodfellow!) who soon brought grain enough to fill the granaries not of the sage only but of all the people of Arur; and Paravaiyar made the distribution with great eclat.

Golden Gifts :

A devotee of his celebrated under the name of kot-puli Nayanar. At his earnest request Sundarar visited him and was received with extraordinary pomp, the chieftain bringing out his two daughters, whom he presents to him to be his slaves. The saint receives them with the words ; 'They shall be my daughters', and in the kindest manner conversed with them and gave them presents. The incident throws light upon the habits and feelings of the time. From thence Sundarar returned home, and found that Paravaiyar was, as usual, in want of supplies, and the more so as a great feast was at hand. Accordingly he set out to the town of Pugalur and going to the temple implored the assistance of the God, and afterwards retiring to the neighbouring monastery (or choultry,) gathered together some bricks which had been brought in for repairs, and piled them up as a kind of pillow, spreading over them his upper garment.^H He thus went to sleep, and when he awoke, behold! the bricks were gold, a wonderful circumstance which he commemorated in a suitable ode. After this he made a circuit through the towns in the neighbourhood of the Kaveri. During this circuit the king of Uraiyur lost a very precious breastplate inlaid with gems; but in answer to the prayer of the saint it was restored, and put into a vessel of water used for bathing

the idol. Thus, when the servant poured water upon the image the precious jewel fell out and arranged itself around the neck of the idol, plainly indicating the god's agency in its restoration. Sometime after this he again supplicated the god (perhaps at the instigation of Paravaiyar) for another gift of money, and received what the history calls 'piles of gold' but its nature and value are not further specified. He then went on to visit the Konkunad; and after a great round came to Cithambaram. One night when trying to find his way to Vriddachalam he met an aged brahman from whom he asked directions for the way.

The brahman, really Civan himself, showed it, and disappeared. Thus was the master the ever-ready guide and companion of his servant.¹ At that time the god spoke to him in a voice which he heard but saw no form bidding him cast the gold that he was carrying about with him into the Manimuttaru river, assuring him that when he required he should find it in a certain spot in the tank in the temple of Arur,

Accordingly our sage returning home told his spouse that there was money given him by the god, now lying on the western side of the tank in the temple enclosure. She laughed at him to scorn but he replied: 'By the grace of our god I will give it to thee' and led her to the place: where having performed all reverential ceremonies he went down into the tank to seek the gold; but the god desirous to try him and make the circumstance the occasion of the production of the sacred hymn, withdrew the gold from the tank; so the sage was disappointed, yet he sang a song to be found in the Devaram. Instantly the gold was

restored, but on examining it, it was found to be of inferior quality. This also was a trial, and after he had devoutly sung another song he received the gold in all its purity. Paravaiyar's mouth was stopped and her inordinate desire of money satisfied. After this the sage and his wife lived together for sometime in great comfort and peace.

At various shrines

He now set out on a new circuit, in the course of which he came to Cirkali (Shiyali) where he venerated the feet of Gñana Sambhandar but whether this means that he there met that sage or paid veneration to some image of him, is not clear. In the course of this journey a remarkable circumstance happened: the sage worn out with fatigue and suffering from hunger and thirst was fainting by the way when his ever watchful master in the shape of a brahman appeared to him under a pavilion in which everything necessary for the sage's refreshment was provided. He and all his retinue probably numbering some hundreds were fed, and after that retired to rest; but when they awoke the brahman and the pavilion had both disappeared. This is commemorated in the Devaram. He then went on to Cithambaram and there worshipped Siva 'the head of the assembly'. Afterwards his wanderings led him to a place called Tiru-Kachur, which is a few miles from Chingleput. There again nightfall found him under the outer wall of the town exhausted and famished. Civan, the Supreme, however appears and with his mendicant bowl in his hand says, 'Remain here, and dismiss all anxiety. I will go and ask alms for you and speedily return.' Accordingly the disquished god went to all



brahman houses round and begged for curry and rice, and bringing these back to the famished sage placed them before him. So Sundarar praised the unknown brahman's love, while he and his retinue ate and were refreshed. Forthwith the brahman disappeared. Another hymn commemorates this.

His next journey was to Kanji (Kanchee) where he worshipped the god under the name of Ekambarar.

Here he remained for some time, and then went to Tiru-Kalatti, (Kalahasti) the mountain where Kannappa-Nayanar's image stands and there he offered his adoration and sang his hymn.

His entanglement with Sangiliyar.

After this he returned to Tiru-otri-ur.

We now come to what is the most curious episode in the sage's history. At the outset of the story we find Sundarar in relation to two of the ladies of Kailasam. One of these under the name of Paravaiyar has been born on earth, and, has become his wife; the other Aninthithai (the Irreproachable) also was now born upon earth, in the family of the yeoman class (Velalar) under the name of Sangiliyar ('She of the chain'). On earth she grew up thoroughly devoted to the worship of her mistress Uma. In due time her parents prepared to give her in marriage to a suitable person of the tribe; but she steadily refused, saying that she was destined to belong to none but a devotee of Civa. At length after much suffering, she finds herself installed in the temple of Tiru-otri-ur in a suitable dwelling as a nun, or pledged devotee of the goddess, her mistress. In this retirement three times every day she visited the temple

to behold the deity; and behind veil in an appropriate recess, she employed herself in weaving garlands of flowers to adorn the sacred images. Thus it happened one day that when Sundarār Murthi came to the temple and looked round upon the various worshippers he went into the recess where the garlands were prepared. There, led by the hand of fate he beheld Sangiliyar, fell in love with her and going forth enquired her name and learnt that she was a devotee in the service of the temple. He straightway offered his petition to his master, who in things good and bad is represented here as being the unscrupulous friend and confidant rather than the lord of his devotee. The god replied to the sage's prayer, 'She whom you ask for is the most ardently devoted ascetic of the temple; but fear not, I will give her to thee'. Accordingly at midnight when she was asleep in her cell the god appeared to her in a dream. This appearance threw her into ecstasies, and falling at his feet she cried Lord, what meritorious deeds have I done in former embodiments that for my salvation thou shouldst thus appear. To this Civan, the supreme replies, 'All in Tiru-venney-nallur know how I made a certain bard my servant and my companion. It is he, my friend, that thou mayest be given to him as his wife. Joyously consent thou to his request!'. She replies 'Thy servant, O Lord will obey thy command, and become the wife of this thy devoted servant: but he now lives in Arur in great joy and prosperity. Cause him to swear an oath that he will never desert me after our marriage.' Accordingly it was arranged that the sage should swear unalterable fidelity which considering that Paravaiyar was still alive, seemed a difficult matter: and in fact both he and his master knew that the oath would not

and could not be kept; but, since Sangiliyar would listen to no compromise, it was agreed at the suggestion of the god that the oath should be sworn not in the shrine before the sacred image, in which case it would be binding, but under a tree in the precincts, in which case it would not be a binding oath!^L The god himself having suggested this she accepted it, and accordingly the pretended oath was sworn. The next day the god appeared to the devotees of the temple in a dream, and commanded them to give Sangiliyar in marriage to his servant Sundarar, which was done accordingly.

Thus a new life begins for the sage, who is now in fact attached to Cithambaram, of which Tiruvotriur is a suburb^M; yet he has not forgotten the lord of Arur; and after that, breaking his oath, leaves Tiruvotriur to return to his first loves, both spiritual and earthly. But it is said that his eyes became blinded as a punishment for breaking his oath, and thus blind, but still singing with devotion the praises of the master who, had, as it would seem, betrayed him into this sin of perjury^G he makes his way towards Arur. On the road he visited several shrines specially. Alamkadu, where he saw the temple of 'the Lady of Karikal'. He then went to Kanji, where in answer to his fervent supplications his left eye was restored. After this he went onwards from village to village, but it seems that as a further punishment he was afflicted with what would appear to have been a kind of leprosy covering the whole of his body. This however, was removed in answer to his prayers, at the village of Tiru-avaduturai^N where he was directed by the god to bathe in the tank on the north side of the temple. This was the occasion for

further hymns of thanksgiving. Still he was afflicted by the loss of his right-eye, especially because the glory of his master in each shrine could scarce be beheld even by both eyes and one was obviously insufficient. However, in answer to his prayers, this also was granted him, and, in transports of joy, perfectly restored to himself, he re-enters Arur. Meanwhile Paravaiyar, his first wife had heard of his infidelities and mock-marriage and was of course exceedingly indignant, so that when our devotee wished to return to his dwelling she refused to permit any messengers of his to enter the dwelling. In vain was the help of various mediators sought. She declared that she would die rather than be reunited to him. In this extremity the sage has recourse to his master, whom he sought again to employ in what certainly seems to us to be a most undignified occupation^G. It is difficult indeed to fancy 'Civa Peruman' acting in the capacity of Sir Pandarus of Troy! However there seems to have been in this case no limit to the kindly indulgence of the master who treated the devotee, invariably as a spoiled child.^G He accordingly paid two visits to the lady, one in the guise of a devotee, and again in his own glorious form; and she is at length appeased, Sundarar being readmitted to his home. So thoroughly has the god performed his task that when Sundarar arrived he finds his dwelling in festive array, lights gleaming and beautiful flowers shedding light and beauty, and diffusing a heavenly radiance around.

After this, for a long period he and Paravaiyar lived in all the luxury of amplest wealth, the sanctity being apparently in abeyance!

Healing of Eyar-Kon

At this time a distinguished devotee of Sivan, called Eyar-Kon Kale-Kama-Nayanar hearing that Sundarar had actually dared to employ his Master as a vile Pander, was naturally very angry and gave expression to his wrath in words of contemptuous indignation against both the servant and the Master!

Sivan, the supreme, hearing of this, sent a dreadful colic as a punishment to the presumptuous devotee, and when the sufferer appealed to his compassion said to him "Only by the hand of my servant Sundarar canst thou be healed." The impetuous devotee indignantly refused the services of one whose conduct he had so loudly condemned, declaring that he would rather be branded with the three-pronged spear of Sivan made red hot, than allow one who had employed the god on such an unworthy errand to approach him.

However, the sage came and was denied access to the sick man; but forcing his way in, declared that he had come to heal. The patient, in a fury drew his sword and slew himself, rather than be healed by unworthy hands.^o The sage horrified took the sword and was about to kill himself when Siva restored the dead man to life, and filled his mind with heavenly light, the result of which was that he sprang up and wrested the weapon from Sundarar's hand. A full explanation and reconciliation took place and from that time Eyar-kon became the attached friend of the sage, who paid him a long visit and then returned to Arur.

15 His friend Seraman perumal

After this, a new friend comes into the life of the sage. This person is called Seraman perumal Nayanar, who was the chieftain of Kodunkolur. This petty king was a very remarkable devotee and his history is related at great length. We shall only note the particulars connected with his intimacy with our sage. The first place of importance which they visited together was Vedaraniyam, celebrated in the history of Gnana Sambandhar. This chief seems to have been himself a poet. They then went to Madura, and travelled round the Pandiyan Kingdom, while the sage composed and sang lyrics at every sacred shrine. After many days spent in Arur, the two friends took a journey westward, and having to cross the Kaveri which was swollen by the rains, the sage sang one of his celebrated songs, the consequence of which was that the river divided, and standing on either side like walls of crystal permitted them to pass over dryshod. After they had sung praises to the god, the river quietly returned to its usual channel. After this Sundara-Murti accompanied his friend to Kodunkolur where he was received with royal pomp and made a splendid progress round the little state, singing his sacred lyrics everywhere. After some time, he felt an irresistible impulse to return to Arur, but his friend and patron resisted his departure, and only consented on the understanding that immense piles of gold, jewels, costly garments and perfumes should be with the sage, carried by a little army of porters. When they were on the way, the hosts of Civan disguised as robbers came and carried off all the treasure; but the sage went to the nearest temple, and sang a lyric which had such an effect that the robbers

brought back the whole of their spoil and piled it up at the gate of the temple: so the wealth reached Arur in safety, no doubt to the great satisfaction of Paravaiyar, who was of an avaricious disposition, it may be inferred.^G On a latter occasion when Sundarar returned to visit his friend, it is said that in a certain village he heard sounds of rejoicing proceeding from one house and of mourning from the opposite one. On enquiring the reason he was told that in the house mourning a boy of five years of age had gone to bathe in the tank with another boy about his own age; and that one of these boys had been swallowed by an alligator,^P while the other had escaped. The mourning in the one house was for the child carried away in such a terrible manner; while the rejoicing in the other house was for the child that had returned safe whom they were investing with the sacred thread! The saint was filled with compassion for the mourners, who came crowding to worship at his feet imploring him to accept their hospitality and feeling that his presence was more than a compensation for their bereavement. St. Sundarar took them to the temple tank and sang one of his sacred lyrics, praying that the child might be restored. Accordingly the dreaded king of death brought back the spirit of the child, re-united it to the body, and caused the alligator^P to bring the child thus rescued to the bank. This wonderful resurrection filled the whole countryside with wonder, and rich presents poured in, while the land rang with the praises of the illustrious visitor.

Many days after this, the sage while his host had gone to bathe, went to the temple of Tiruvanjai-kalam, and having performed his worship with due devotion, prostrated

himself before the image in an ecstasy of mystic fervour, praying in language, that might have been adopted from the song of Simeon, that he might at length be released from the bonds of earthly life and permitted again to worship at the sacred feet on the holy hill. No sooner had he offered this prayer than Siva Peruman, addressing all the gods, bade them in glad procession proceed to earth and placing Sundarar on a white elephant conduct him to Paradise. This was accordingly done. All the heavenly hosts surrounded him. He was mounted upon an elephant; and with the sound of all kinds of music, amid the praises of all the gods, and showers of flowers from the sky, he was conducted along the celestial way to Kailasam. Meanwhile the chief his friend returning saw the wondrous procession making its way through the sky, and immediately mounting his royal charger breathed into its ear, the 'mystic five syllables'. Forthwith the charger sprang into the skies, overtook the elephant on which the saint was riding, and led the way to the 'silver hill'. All the choice warriors of the kingdom seeing their master taken from their sight fell upon their swords, and leaving their earthly bodies at once received the heavenly shapes of heroes, and so preceding their master waited at the gate of Paradise to welcome him and do him service. So the whole company went on, the saint still chanting his inspired song. At length at the sacred gates the sage was admitted, but his friend and attendants remained outside. Sivan received his faithful devotee and friend with warm welcome. The sage, bowing at his feet, said "The fault which banished me from hence and consigned me to an embodied existence is forgiven, and once more thou dost admit me to share thy joy with thee!" He then represented the case of the

Nayanar who was waiting without the gate. The order was given at once for his admission and our sage under the old title of Halala Sundarar was made the chief of Sivan's hosts, with his friend as his second in command.

Afterwards, Paravaiyar and Sangiliyar restored to their old names and positions, were gathered with the servants of Parvathi. So they all entered into the joy of an eternal rest. To the king of the sea it was moreover given in charge that he should carry down to the Southern land the hymn which the sage had sung on the way. Thus ends the legend of the third of the Saiva saints, or if we include Manikkavasagar, the fourth. It will be seen that they were very diverse in character and history

- A) Comparisons are odious. Ed.
- B) Pope's chronology is erroneous. Ed.
- C) Civa appears as an old Brahmin and not as a mendicant. Ed.
- D) Our Naayanaar did not call the document a forgery. He disputed, however, its validity. Ed.
- E) This question arose only after the pronouncement of the verdict. Ed.
- F) The narration of Pope is not in conformity with the Periya Puraanam. Ed.
- G) It is for remarks such as this, Pope was severely criticised by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai. Ed.
- H) The saint slumbered in the temple premises. Ed.
- I) The saint was actually misdirected by the Lord. Ed.
- J) There is no room for lack of clarity, here. Ed.
- K) It was then mid-day. Ed.
- L) This is not a right interpretation. Ed.
- M) This dictum of Pope is incorrect. The bathing was done at Tiruththurutthi. Ed. The death of Kalikkaamar precedes the arrival of St. Sundarar. Ed.
- N) It was a crocodile, not an alligator. Ed.



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